

[Music]

Ivette Torres: Every year in September, the nation celebrates **National Recovery Month**. The **Recovery Month** observance celebrates people in recovery, raises our awareness and understanding of mental and substance use disorders, and recognizes those who work in the field of behavioral health.

The 2015 theme, "*Join the Voices for Recovery: Visible, Vocal, Valuable!*" highlights the value of recovery movement which has given a voice to those who have overcome mental and substance use disorders. You can educate, mentor and help others better understand how they can become engaged in supporting those in recovery, or, assist in helping those in need of treatment, get the help they need to overcome mental and substance use disorders.

By hosting activities and events in September, you can help ignite conversations about prevention, treatment, and recovery services for behavioral health conditions. This can help to point out the societal benefits of recovery to elected or appointed officials, civic leaders, the business sector, and others in the community who need to be educated about the gains and cost savings that can be achieved through the availability of mental and substance use disorder services.

National Recovery Month helps to educate Americans about the fact that mental health services, addiction treatment, and recovery support services can enable those with a mental disorder, a substance use disorder- or both-lead healthy, rewarding and productive lives.

No one is immune to these disorders and their effects. Nearly 1 in 10 Americans struggle with a substance use disorder, and about 1 in 5 have a mental health problem. As we hear their stories, we learn that while the journey of recovery follows many different pathways, progress on every one of those paths depends on relationships marked by care, support, and respect.

We hope that this program inspires you to organize a **Recovery Month** event in 2015 so you, too, can join the voices for recovery - becoming Visible, Vocal and Valuable. Be sure to visit our website at RecoveryMonth.gov to get more information.

Tom Coderre: Welcome, everyone, to SAMHSA's 25th Annual **National Recovery Month** observance. That's a- round of applause.

[Applause]

Twenty-five years!

[Applause]

My name is Tom Coderre, and I'm the new senior advisor to the administrator at SAMHSA. **Recovery Month** is so special to me because I'm also a person in long-term recovery.

[Whoop]

[Applause]

Thank you. And for me, that means I haven't used alcohol or drugs since May of 2003, and as a result, my life, the life of my family, and ultimately the life of my entire community has gotten better as a result of my personal recovery, so this is a very personal thing for me. And as a result of my recovery, I've become a very productive member of society, and I live a productive and full life today. And I'm proof that when people get the help that they need, they can and do recover. I'm honored to serve as your MC today.

This event highlights the important role recovery plays in addressing behavioral health issues, such as mental and substance use disorders. This is what the 25th annual **National Recovery Month** observance is all about: celebrating individuals throughout the nation who have achieved long-term recovery for mental and substance use disorders and recognizing the important contributions of the dedicated men and women providing treatment and recovery services.

Recovery Month shows us all that behavioral health is essential to overall health, that prevention works, that treatment for mental and substance use disorders is effective, and that people can and do recover.

Pamela S. Hyde: This year's a little unique, as has already been mentioned. It's the 25th observance of **National Recovery Month**. Twenty-five years, a quarter of a century, we have spent illuminating, defining, validating, and shaping a concept into a fact: that people do recover from addiction and mental illness, and people with these disorders go on to lead full and productive lives, and we're here to acknowledge that and to celebrate that reality.

It's time to recognize and celebrate the families, the loved ones, the friends who support them, and the behavioral health providers who help them regain their health. It's also a chance to share the podium with others who support this important work of recovery and wellness, people like our partners from the White House Office of the National Drug Control Policy. You're going to hear a little bit later from Acting Director Michael Botticelli, and I'm going to have the pleasure of introducing him more formally in just a minute. So, welcome, Michael. We'll hear from him and we'll also hear directly from those here at the head table who know a lot about recovery and about achieving wellness.

Now, this is my fifth **Recovery Month** press conference as SAMHSA Administrator; I am proud of that. It's always a big month and a big day for us. Somebody said to me in the elevator the other day, "It's Recovery Month! I hope you get to sleep in October!"

[Laughter]

So, that's how busy we are during this month, trying to get the message out. And every year, when I prepare for this event, I'm always struck by the great job that the SAMHSA staff do and the **Recovery Month** planning partners do, many of whom are in the room here today. The **Recovery Month** planning partners represent organizations with members all over this country who have a significant and collective contribution that they make to the important work of spreading the message of recovery all year round.

Michael Botticelli: During the past few years, we have really undergone a sea change in the way we think about people with substance use disorders and people in recovery. And that change is owed to the tireless efforts of our federal **Recovery Month** partners and our state and local partners, as well, many of whom are here today, and the growing voices of people in recovery who have decided to share their stories with the world.

In fact, the first action my office took - this I have to actually give thanks to former Director Kerlikowske - at the beginning of this administration, was to establish a recovery branch at the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy to ensure that we're doing everything possible to support Americans in recovery. Part of what we've learned is that supporting people involves more than just treating the symptoms of their substance use or mental health disorders.

For people to reach their full potential and contribute to their communities, we need to raise awareness and reduce the stigma associated with substance use and mental disorders, build community-based recovery support services, and ensure that our laws, policies, and practices do not continue to perpetuate barriers to recovery. To accomplish this, we need all of your help, engage broader community stakeholders and policymakers at every level because too often the national conversation about drug policy misses the point that millions of real people, every day, are in recovery and that our policies need to and must support them. These people are not strangers: They are our neighbors, our co-workers; they're in our armed forces; and they are our family and our friends. There are many of us in this room today leading happy, healthy, and productive lives.

As Pam talked, I've been recovery for quite a while, and it has been an exciting and quite honestly an improbable past 25-year journey to the White House, but my message is simple: I am not unique, and my story is not one in a million. I am one of millions. That's why we've made a goal to take away the stigma that can be associated with the

disease of addiction. We believe that by raising awareness and by celebrating those who are doing the hard but rewarding work of recovery, we can move the needle on public perception of addiction, treatment, and recovery.

H. Westley Clark: Thank you for joining us today to support recovery efforts in our communities across the nation. To paraphrase President Obama, people in recovery are not strangers; they are our family members, friends, colleagues, and neighbors; and we will help them succeed as partners with them every step of the way. We do this by providing evidence-based prevention, treatment, and recovery services to help people help themselves. We do this by reaching out to their families, friends, and communities, and we do this by providing the leadership and know-how necessary to move our local, state, and national policies away from nonproductive, nonmedically based, punitive measures towards medically informed, effective interventions.

SAMHSA partners with other public and private agencies to extend the reach of our programs to eliminate any program level redundancy and to leverage infrastructure, resources, and expertise, thus helping to ensure the return on investment for the United States public, and making sure that that's maximized.

We work with nonprofit grantees to focus on underserved minority and high-risk populations that are often not covered by mainstream public and private insurers. These populations we serve include those with criminal justice involvement, those without stable housing, and those living in rural and other underserved communities.

It is vital to our nation's social and economic well-being that we not only provide services to individuals and families and communities in need but that we also speak up for them as we support their efforts to attain and sustain their own recovery.

Robert Ashford: My name is Robert Ashford, and I am a person in long-term recovery, which for me means that that's a constantly changing description, but I'm a son to a loving mother again for 10 years that I didn't have a relationship and I didn't know if I would speak to ever again. I'm a brother to both my sister and my brother back home in Texas. I'm a student. I'm a friend. And I'm many things that I didn't know if I was ever going to be again because recovery is possible, and my life is proof of that.

And Dr. Clark described various things that I have the opportunity to do because they're gifts of recovery, gifts of my life living today both creating and running the collegiate recovery community at the University of North Texas, day in and day out working with students that are hearing the same message that we're describing each day: that recovery is possible and recovery happens. People that are going back to school in what Bill White describes as an "abstinence-hostile environment," and I would expand to say it's a "recovery-hostile environment" for all pathways to recovery-because there is multiple, and abstinence isn't the only one, though it's a popular one.

Students in recovery need their services and resources that we're describing here. They are an underserved population and the future of this country, and that's why our work is so important with them. And more importantly, with young people in recovery, as an advocacy and action organization, it's going into our communities, both underserved and served genuinely, to let them know this message that we're talking about in Washington, DC, to let them know what the ONDCP is doing for the state of recovery by creating a recovery branch in the White House.

The work that SAMHSA is doing, knowing that prevention and treatment are effective, and that access to them is a very important tool to make sure that they're effective because if you don't go to treatment, it can't be effective. And that recovery happens no matter where you're at, that recovery is possible regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, or any other identifying characteristic of a human being that as a human, we have an inherent right to live a life of wellness. And that's what I get to do every day because 2 years ago, because of SAMHSA's work and because of block grants, I had the access to treatment, and I got the help that I needed, and I continue to get the ongoing supports and services because of the people in this room and at this table, and I thank you for that.

Paolo Del Vecchio: As a person in recovery, I know that via recovery, we move from pain to promise, from hurt to healing, from hoping hopeless to being hopeful, from the backwards of hospitals to back home, from the prisons to the PTA, from being out of control to being *in* control, in control of our mental illnesses, in control of our addictions, and in control of our lives.

Many individuals, families, and communities can and do take their steps to begin their journeys of recovery. Today, SAMHSA's releasing a new, important tool to promote recovery and enable individuals with mental illnesses and substance use disorders to take more control of their lives. Can I have the guide, so I can show everyone?

Taking Action, a mental health recovery self-education program-this is a training manual 10 years in the making, designed to assist people in recovery to achieve wellness and recovery based on the principles of wellness, recovery, and action-planning, or WRAP, which is an evidence-based practice as part of our national registry of effective practices and policies.

The manual is available online at SAMHSA's website. Our SAMHSA National Suicide Prevention Lifeline- again, I'll mention the number, 800-273-TALK, that's 800-273-8255- last year, responded to over 1 million calls. We are preventing tragedies. We are saving lives. The concept of recovery shifted our thinking and approaches across the nation and across the world.

Today, the expectations, including for individuals, is a serious conditions is that we can fully recover and learn to manage our mental and substance use conditions successfully and live full, meaningful lives in our communities.

Bre Williams: My recovery journey started-I was a freshman in college. I was being a poster kid for truancy in my city. I didn't think that I would go to college, and I just didn't think that I would be accepted. Nevertheless, I was, and during my second semester, I was in the darkest state of my life, and I attempted suicide. When I woke up the next day, I figured that I must have purpose. There had to be some reason why I woke up. And so, through that, I wanted to change how I thought about myself. So, I had gone back to a tool that my mother had introduced to me because at the time, I didn't want to use the tool. I felt like what do parents know? They only feed you, house you, clothe you, they don't know too much.

[Laughter]

But I found that my mother was very insightful, and she introduced me to the Wellness Recovery Action Plan. So, when I woke up from my failed suicide attempt, I enrolled myself in counseling, I opened up that little red book, and I found that I have the tools within myself and the drive within myself to change my life, to be an active participant in my own recovery, to love myself, and to love the journey.

I stand before you today as an amazing facilitator, as a mother, as an amazing person that has had some life, but I know that no matter what, recovery is possible because we have plans, we have supports, we have organizations like SAMHSA and like peers that remind people that, no matter what, you can recover. Thank you.

[Cheering and Applause]

[Music]

Male Narr: For more information on **National Recovery Month**, to find out how to get involved, or to locate an event near you, visit the *Recovery Month* website at RecoveryMonth.gov.

Male VO: For those with mental or substance use disorders, what does recovery look like? It's a transformation. It's a supporting hand. It's new beginnings. When does recovery start? It starts when you ask for help and support. Join the Voices for Recovery. Speak up. Reach out.

Female VO: For information on mental and substance use disorders, including prevention and treatment referral, call 1-800-662-HELP. Brought to you by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Female VO: We try to hide our truths about our mental and substance use disorders from the world and sometimes from ourselves. Saying "I'm fine" is a façade. By facing our problems, recovery begins, and we are empowered to speak our truth. Join the Voices for Recovery. Speak up. Reach out.

Male VO: For information on mental and substance use disorders, including prevention and treatment referral, call 1-800-662-HELP. Brought to you by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

[Music]

Ivette Torres: Twenty-five years ago, the **National Recovery Month** campaign kicked off under the program name, "Treatment Works!," as a celebration for individuals working in the field of addiction treatment and recovery. Since then, the campaign has expanded to include not only individuals and families in recovery but also to raise public understanding and acceptance of behavioral health conditions.

Recovery Month has grown tremendously to include participation by millions of people around the world, presidential proclamations, and award-winning products like recoverymonth.gov website, an annual toolkit, public service announcements, and the *Road to Recovery* TV and radio series. By raising awareness about the benefits of treatment and a life in recovery, **Recovery Month** has helped individuals, families, and communities across the country.

Pamela S. Hyde: Well, **Recovery Month** is so important to us for many reasons, but probably the *first* and most important reason is the number of people that are engaged in the process of talking about, sharing about, and making recovery a real issue and helping not only the people who are involved in the various events and the process but also the general public aware of recovery and the fact that people can, in fact, recover from mental health issues and from substance abuse issues.

Wilma Townsend: **Recovery Month**, to me, has been an experience where people who are in recovery themselves are so proud of what they've done and how recovery has changed their lives that they've gone and made sure they've brought people in who are not in recovery yet, but who seeking recovery, so that they can see that it's possible. And they've gone out of their way to be able to have events, to be able to talk to people, be able to get the community involved, the churches involved in many different ways.

Female Speaker: So, can I get a big cheer for doing it one day at a time together!

[Cheering]

Michele Latour Monroe: Some of the most amazing things for me, as part of events of **Recovery Month** -and **Recovery Month** in general- is that I truly saw a different side of life. I have met the most amazing people. Their strength and their energy, their compassion, their commitment has just been overwhelming. And when I go out and I speak about **Recovery Month** or SAMHSA initiatives, I tell people I've never been called to have that type of power or to have that type of strength or courage in my own life, and I'm in awe of everything that they've accomplished.

Male Voice: We are here to celebrate *you*! We are here to *celebrate recovery*!

[Cheering]

Ray Bullman: **Recovery Month** events are tantamount to what **Recovery Month** is: It's a public face, it's a public voice, it's an opportunity for anyone to either get on a motorcycle and ride to promote recovery, to cross a bridge-which is symbolic for lots of things in recovery-and it's an opportunity to inform and educate from the ground level, through the media to policymakers.

Ivette Torres: As the **Recovery Month** campaign has reached out to more and more Americans, perceptions of addiction and recovery have changed, leading to a reduction of discriminatory practices and offering increased hope to those dealing with addiction.

H. Westley Clark: **Recovery Month** promotes the awareness that we're dealing with an illness just like other illnesses, and that as people who get treated, people in recovery can be treated just like any other person.

Who does recovery benefit?

[Crowd: Everybody!]

Everybody! Who does recovery benefit?

That I think reduces discrimination. Discrimination is fostered by mythologies, by distorted views of individuals, and by fear. And **Recovery Month** promotes awareness, it promotes education, and I think in reducing fear, it reduces discrimination.

Frances M. Harding: **Recovery Month** also gives us an opportunity for the general public to understand a little bit more and become less fearful and afraid of an individual with an addiction or with living with some type of a mental health disorder. That's very important because we have been trying to reduce the discrimination that is out there right now around people who may self-disclose that they are living with a condition of either an addiction or a mental health disorder.

Marsha Baker: *Recovery Month* now is really a great avenue for the new recovery advocacy movement, where people are no longer hiding both their addiction and their recovery, but are welcoming that and are really willing to share that with other people, bringing hope to people who need help and encourage them to seek it.

Ivette Torres: *Recovery Month* spreads the positive message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover. Through our collaborative efforts, we are making great strides and looking forward to even more success in the future.

Paolo Del Vecchio: For me, *Recovery Month* gives me strength, and it helps not just during the month of September when we celebrate, but throughout the year provides that fortification, that support of peers, families, friends, providers, whole community coming around and celebrating life, celebrating recovery.

Male Voice: We got any people in recovery out there?

[Cheering]

Tanya C. Naranjo: *Recovery Month*, in my opinion, is a celebration of everyone in recovery. It's a universal celebration of accomplishment, of what's transpired throughout the year. *Recovery Month* is an opportunity to demonstrate and to celebrate and say, "Look at all the wonderful things we're doing for recovery."

Michael Botticelli: I think that *Recovery Month* also provides a vehicle not only for people in recovery but those who love us and care for us to really come together in meaningful ways to celebrate the achievement that people in recovery have done in their lives.

H. Westley Clark: I really hope that *Recovery Month* continues to be embraced by the community because these issues of substance use and mental illness will continue in our society, and what we're trying to do is mitigate the impact. And so, one vehicle is *Recovery Month* to help communicate that the impact can be reduced.

Wilma Townsend: *Recovery Month* is the road to systems change, to people being respected, to people seeing they don't have to allow addiction and mental illness to take over their lives.

Female VO: At times, the path to recovery from a mental and substance use disorder may be unclear. At times, the path may be rocky. At times, the path may be wandering. But laying a strong foundation, with the support of others, makes all the difference.

For information on mental and substance use disorders, including prevention and treatment referral, call 1-800-662-HELP. Brought to you by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Ivette Torres: The stories of recovery are the stories of our family members, our friends, and the people we meet every day during our activities of daily life. As they succeed in living self-directed lives and achieving their full potential, we see the benefits of recovery not only for the individual, but, for their family, friends, and community.

You can be an agent for positive change to help people from all walks of life on the path to hope, health, and wellness. I hope this show has inspired you to get involved and to organize a **Recovery Month** event for September. For information on how to get started, go to the *Recovery Month* website at RecoveryMonth.gov. You will find examples of events others have organized. But remember: The type of **Recovery Month** event you choose to organize can be whatever your imagination and creativity inspires you to do. Who knows-maybe your event will be highlighted in our showcase of events for 2015!

Thanks for all you do to support recovery. Let's keep this exciting work going!

[Music]

Male VO: Why recovery?

Female VO: I reclaimed my life, restored my relationships, and now rejoice because recovery benefits everyone around me.

Male VO: So, why recovery? Recovery is real.

Female VO: In the U.S., millions of us are in recovery for substance use and mental disorders. With help, we have worked to overcome these health conditions and are leading happy, healthy, responsible, and rewarding lives in communities throughout our nation.

Male VO: But there are more than 40 million individuals who still need help, support, and understanding to achieve recovery.

Female VO: Through hope, empowerment, treatment, and respect, people can and do recover from substance use and mental disorders.

Male VO: Recovery is possible. The time to respond is now.

Together: Join the Voices for Recovery.

Male VO: For 24/7, free, and confidential information or treatment referral for you or someone you love, call 1-800-662-HELP or visit SAMHSA.gov.

Female VO: Prevention works. Treatment is effective. People recover. Brought to you by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Male VO: Your path to recovery isn't like mine. But when you need a hand with a mental health issue or substance use disorder, reach out until you find one.

Female VO: For information on mental and substance use disorders, including prevention and treatment referral, call 1-800-662-HELP. Brought to you by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

[Music]

Male Narr: For a copy of this program or other programs in the *Road to Recovery* series, call SAMHSA at 1-800-662-HELP or order online at RecoveryMonth.gov and click on the Video-Radio-Web tab.

[Music]